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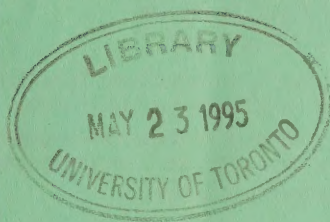
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NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA'S PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

by

Philippe, S.R.L. Clément

May 1993



Unedited Working Paper for Discussion

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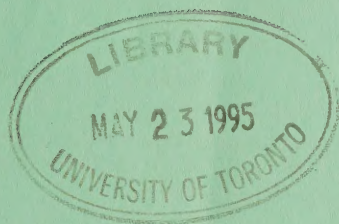
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DISCUSSION PAPER
(First Draft, May 21, 1993)

**NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA'S
PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES**

Philippe, S.R.L. Clément
Policy Advisor
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and the Economy

INTRODUCTION

The concern to integrate environmental protection and economic development within a single decision-making process was first raised in 1987 in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Needless to say, such integration is both the key to ensuring *sustainable development* and, given its complexity, the main obstacle to it.

At the Earth Summit in June 1992, renewed attention was focussed on the issue of integrating the environment and development in the decision-making process. In *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* (IUCN\UNEP\WWP, Gland, Switzerland, 1991, p. 71), which was one of the key Conference documents, David A. Munro and Martin W. Holdgate discuss the need to create a national framework that promotes an integrated approach to development and conservation within organizations.

Agenda 21 sets out the resolutions that emerged from the discussions at the Earth Summit. These resolutions have been endorsed by the Government of Canada. Chapter 8 of the document (which is still in draft form and not yet translated from the English) addresses the integration of environment and development in decision-making.

Chapter 8 includes recommendations for improving planning and management systems, including increasing the delegation of authority in the area of planning and management at all levels of the public administration. It also recommends that governments adopt a national strategy for sustainable development based on the commitments made at the Earth Summit. Such a strategy should seek to harmonize economic, social and environmental policies. The experience gained from such exercises as the national conservation and environmental plans should be drawn on in preparing the national sustainable development strategies. Such strategies should be developed through consultations with groups representing as many of the various interests as possible.

BACKGROUND

In Canada, the mobilization of governments with a view to preparing sustainable development strategies dates back to October 1986. As a direct follow-up to the visit to Canada of the World Commission on Environment and Development, the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers (today the CCME) established the National Task Force on Environment and Economy to initiate multisectoral dialogue among Canada's environment ministers, senior executive officers from Canadian industry and representatives from academia and non-governmental organizations on the possibility of developing a strategy respecting the integration of the environment and the economy.

The National Task Force on Environment and Economy concentrated on issues of decision-making structures. The main thrust of its report is that it is possible to promote sustainable development by changing the way decisions are made (*Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy*, 1987, p. 14).

The report deals essentially with three aspects of sustainable development: mechanisms for the implementation of environmental strategies; public consultation and information dissemination processes; and the accountability of those making the decisions. The Task Force's recommendations were, however, general in nature. For example, it recommended that Canada's environment ministers assume a leadership role and demonstrate a commitment to environment-economy integration, that industry play a more active role and that a permanent forum (round tables) be created for multisectoral co-operation in efforts to build consensus on sustainable development.

The report of the Task Force was the main catalyst for other initiatives by government and industry. However, the report did not propose specific national objectives for a national framework for sustainable development.

The responsibility for preparing sustainable development strategies was left to the various levels of government working in concert with industry, through provincial and territorial round tables on the environment and the economy, the National Round Table on Environment and Economy (NRTEE), and municipal and sectoral round tables, such as the Round Table on the Forest Industry.

The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the progress made in sustainable development planning in Canada. Because this is an extremely vast topic, this document can only skim the surface. It does not cover the considerable work done by the many municipal and sectoral round tables. Moreover, an overview of strategic planning of sustainable development would not be complete without a description of the significant progress made by federal organizations, such as the Department of the Environment and other departments and central agencies, over the past five years. Their achievements include **Canada's Green Plan**, the

reform of the environmental assessment and review process and many other initiatives in the area of sustainable development.

OUR APPROACH

The study covers three main areas:

- (1) the approach taken by provincial and territorial governments to build multisectoral consensus with a view to preparing a sustainable development strategy; this part focusses primarily on the work of the round tables, touching briefly on the public consultation initiatives undertaken by the governments themselves.
- (2) the strategies developed by the round tables; this section comprises a short description of the various strategies proposed by the provincial and territorial round tables to their respective governments.
- (3) government follow-up of the strategies proposed by the round tables.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our research was greatly facilitated by the generous assistance of the provincial and territorial governments and round tables, which provided the data required to draft this report.

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

NEWFOUNDLAND

The strategic planning of sustainable development in Newfoundland is still in the early stages. The province has focussed its efforts on analysing environmental problems and on the possibility of integrating economic development and environmental protection. The Newfoundland Round Table on Environment and Economy is the main instrument for strategic environmental planning in the province. Unlike the other provinces, Newfoundland has opted to concentrate on environmental problems rather than on sectors of activity.

One of the first steps of the Newfoundland government was to prepare a list of critical questions respecting environmental problems. The list was widely distributed to the public and to advocacy groups for comment. The Newfoundland Round Table then established working groups, composed of Round Table members and representatives of industry, government and non-governmental organizations. The mandate of the working groups is to examine particular environmental problems and to gather the views of various interest groups on these problems. The results of this exercise will be compiled and used in drafting the reports to be submitted to the Round Table.

The Round Table will then prepare a sustainable development strategy, which will be the subject of public consultation and then submitted to the Newfoundland government for follow-up.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Prince Edward Island was the first province in Canada to adopt a conservation strategy. Introduced in 1987, the strategy was the culmination of an extensive public consultation process. It is used by the P.E.I. government in the management of natural resources.

The Prince Edward Island conservation strategy focusses on five key sectors: soil degradation and conservation; water and wildlife management; pollution control; protection of scenic sites; and shoreline management.

Several of the recommendations contained in the strategy have already been implemented by the P.E.I. government and significant progress has been made in the area of environmental remediation. The conservation strategy has also led to the development of a new environmental code of ethics.

In an effort to increase the integration of economic development and environmental protection and in response to the report of the Brundtland Commission, the government of Prince Edward Island established a Round Table on Environment and Economy in 1989 to advise the government in its sustainable development choices. In 1990, the Round Table published a report on the provincial government's sustainable development initiatives. The report, entitled *Stewardship and Sustainability*, provides a strategic framework and plan of action for the future. It takes into account the fact that environmental management requires not one large decision but rather a long series of small decisions which extend into the future. The report sets out six* objectives: the reduction of soil erosion; the protection of water quality; the reduction of solid waste; the conservation of biological diversity and increased public participation in decision-making.

NOVA SCOTIA

In response to the Report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy, the Nova Scotia government established a Round Table on Environment and Economy in 1989.

The Round Table's mandate was to prepare a sustainable development strategy for the province. It began by preparing a series of background documents and holding a workshop for environmentalists from across the province. The purpose of the workshop was to set priorities. The documents were also distributed to the public.

Following these consultations, the Round Table drafted a sustainable development strategy that formed the basis of a second round of consultations. The strategy was then finalized and submitted to the Nova Scotia government for follow-up.

The strategy covers air, water, soil and biological diversity and addresses the following sectors: waste, agriculture, forests, fisheries, tourism, mining, energy, transportation, human habitat and education.

In its strategy, the Round Table sets out the following objectives: reducing air pollution; protecting aquatic ecosystems, fauna and flora; providing drinking water; eliminating sources of aquatic pollution; protecting the biodiversity of plant and animal life, habitats and tourism sites; reducing waste; promoting recycling; protecting public health against the risks posed by pollution; promoting sustainable agriculture and silviculture; promoting ecotourism; reducing the demand for energy and reducing our dependency on non-renewable sources of energy.

* Only five objectives listed. - Tr.

In June 1992, the development strategy was submitted to the provincial legislature. A few months later, the strategy received government approval. The government directed the Policy Board, its central agency, to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy. The Round Table is responsible for monitoring the implementation and reporting to the public.

The Policy Board has given directives to all government agencies regarding the recommendations contained in the strategy that apply to their respective areas of jurisdiction. An implementation plan is currently being developed and should be completed by the summer of 1993.

NEW BRUNSWICK

New Brunswick's sustainable development strategy is summarized in the document entitled *A Proposed Sustainable Development Strategy for New Brunswick. Summary*, produced by the Premier's Round Table on Environment and Economy. The document is available in both official languages. With the exception of the paragraph dealing with government follow-up, the following paragraphs were taken directly from this document.

The *Proposed Sustainable Development Strategy for New Brunswick* is the culmination of a two-year process involving members of 13 sectoral groups and the Premier's Round Table on Environment and the Economy. The sectoral groups, made up of stakeholders who volunteered their time, represent all aspects of environment and economy. The Round Table prepared a series of brief papers, outlining each sector and its economic and environmental roles. These papers were distributed to the public as a starting point for discussion. These papers and the comments gathered in public consultations formed the basis for New Brunswick's sustainable development strategy.

Five* principles guided the drafting of New Brunswick's strategy: the province must promote sustainable development; the province must ensure that economic and environmental factors are integrated in the decision-making process; economic and environmental sustainability must be demonstrated in all major development projects; and non-renewable resources must be managed so that they contribute to the economic and environmental sustainability of future generations.

The strategy contains six major areas of integrated recommendations: (1) informed decision-making and the strengthening of resource and environmental data bases; (2) education and information: developing an action plan to integrate a

* Only four principles are listed. - Tr.

multidisciplinary sustainable educational program; (3) increasing public involvement in developmental decision-making, particularly at the local level; (4) specifying the responsibilities of government in the area of environmental leadership; (5) waste reduction; and (6) energy conservation.

The strategy contains a total of 175 recommendations in 13 different sectors. Implementing the recommendations will involve mobilization, financing and monitoring. The following are among the key recommendations: the New Brunswick government should appoint an auditor general of sustainable development; universities should establish chairs in sustainable development; an action plan should be developed to integrate the concept of sustainable development into the school system; territorial planning should be implemented to protect lakes, rivers and shorelines; promote ecotourism.

The sustainable development strategy of the New Brunswick Round Table was submitted to the provincial government in May 1992 for follow-up. An ad hoc committee composed of four deputy ministers (environment, energy, economic development and natural resources, policy secretariat) and involving the participation of the respective ministers has been established to analyse the strategy with a view to its implementation by the summer of 1993.

QUEBEC

Although the Quebec government has not adopted an official action plan to ensure sustainable development in Quebec, it has taken a number of initiatives to promote the principle of sustainable development in the province. The key initiatives include: the publication of a new *Cap Environnemental* by the Quebec Department of the Environment; the development of a conservation strategy by the Conseil de la Conservation et de l'Environnement; the establishment of the Quebec Round Table on Environment and Economy; and the participation of Quebec in the Earth Summit.

Unlike the other round tables in Canada, the Quebec Round Table has not developed a sustainable development strategy. All initiatives in the province have been taken by the Quebec Department of the Environment.

In November 1989, the Department announced the creation of the Sous-Secrétariat au développement et à la conservation. Its main initiatives are as follows: measures to promote the integration of the environment and the economy within Quebec society and the Quebec government; state-of-the-environment report; an environmental education initiative; prevention and site protection; accountability of citizens and assistance to developing countries.

The Quebec government has also made changes to its decision-making processes. Extensive economic and environmental impact assessments of all proposed regulations, statutes and policies are carried out by the Department of the Environment before they are adopted by the government. The Comité ministériel permanent à l'aménagement, au développement régional et à l'environnement, composed of key government ministers and supported by a secretariat, oversees the integration of environmental and economic considerations.

ONTARIO

The Premier of Ontario established the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy in 1989 to develop a framework for a provincial sustainable development strategy. The six Cabinet ministers and representatives of industry, agricultural sector and environmental organizations who formed the Round Table began by identifying six principles that should guide the development of the strategy: anticipation and prevention; full-cost accounting; informed decision-making; living off the interest; quality over quantity; and respect for nature and the rights of future generations. These principles were described in a document entitled *Challenge Paper*, which formed the basis (along with other more specific policy documents) of public discussions held in Ontario aimed at reaching a consensus on a sustainable development strategy.

The Round Table established six sectoral task forces to examine how sustainable development can be implemented in the following sectors: agriculture, energy and minerals, forestry, manufacturing, transportation, urban development and commerce.

In the spring of 1992, the Ontario Round Table received the sectoral reports of the task forces and began drafting its sustainable development strategy (the title of the document is *Restructuring for Sustainability*). The strategic directions of the Round Table are to improve decision-making, to move forward together, and to ensure accountability. The Ontario Round Table recommends that the Government of Ontario set as its target reducing the economy's energy intensity by 3% for the next 10 years. It also proposes that the tax system lead to: the integration of conservation into the price setting formula; redirecting funds from unsustainable activities to innovations for sustainable development; making changes in professional training; changes in infrastructure; providing incentives to produce environmental reports.

The Ontario Round Table also made recommendations in other areas, such as the development of codes of ethics for certain sectors of industry and the creation of municipal and regional round tables.

Restructuring for Sustainability was presented to the Premier of Ontario in the fall of 1992. The strategy is currently being examined by a committee made up of officials from the ministries most affected. It is in the process of drafting a report on the implementation of the strategy. The report is scheduled to be released in the summer of 1993.

MANITOBA

The Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy has been working on its sustainable development strategy for two years. It began by preparing a framework for a sustainable development strategy in consultation with representatives from various Manitoba government departments.

The framework was submitted to a Cabinet committee on sustainable development for approval. Public meetings were then held to establish a consensus. The framework was subsequently revised and submitted to the Manitoba cabinet for adoption.

Towards a Sustainable Development Strategy for Manitobans is viewed as an evolving document to which changes will likely be made in the future. The strategy sets out the following principles: integration of environmental and economic decisions; management of the environment for the benefit of future generations; shared responsibility for sustaining the environment; prevention of environmental problems; conservation of renewable and non-renewable resources; recycling; enhancement of the productive capability and capacity of the ecosystem; rehabilitation of degraded environments; scientific and technological innovation to further environmental quality; and global responsibility.

The Manitoba government publishes regular progress reports on the implementation of the various components of its sustainable development strategy.

SASKATCHEWAN

With a view to developing its sustainable development strategy, the Saskatchewan Round Table established 11 advisory groups in May 1990 to assess sustainability in the following sectors: agriculture, construction, energy, mining, flora, fauna,*

* According to pages 3 and 65 of the strategy, flora and fauna are treated as a single sector and the eleventh sector, which has not been listed here, is manufacturing. - Tr.

public administration, transportation, households, tourism and forestry. The mandate of the advisory groups was to prepare a report on the environmental sustainability of these sectors. The 11 sectoral reports were submitted to the Round Table in May* 1991. The Round Table drew on these reports in preparing its draft conservation strategy, which was widely distributed to the public for comment. In January 1992, the Round Table held eight public meetings to discuss the strategy. In June 1992, the Round Table presented its revised conservation strategy for sustainable development to the Premier of Saskatchewan. It contains 64 recommendations and 203 initiatives. The document was also tabled in the Saskatchewan Legislature and widely distributed to the public.

The following eight principles form the basis of Saskatchewan's strategy: improvements in environmental quality must become the priority for economic development; the environment can no longer be treated as a free economic commodity; preservation of biological diversity; living off the "interest", not the "capital"; minimizing waste; consideration of the needs of future generations; bringing about a change in values to become a conserver society instead of a consumer society; increasing the accountability of those who make the decisions at the individual and community level.

The tools selected by the Saskatchewan Round Table to implement the strategy are as follows: integrated resource management and land use planning; monitoring and information management; environmental assessment; research; consensus building; business opportunities; regulation; education; and economic tools, such as subsidies, taxes and so on.

The key recommendations of the Saskatchewan Round Table include: the Saskatchewan government should designate an independent body to monitor and report to the public on the progress made in implementing the conservation strategy; decision-making should be improved through integrated resource management and meaningful public participation; the longevity of non-renewable resources should be increased; individuals should be empowered with the responsibility for sustainable development; all policies, programs and projects should be evaluated for environmental, economic and social sustainability before they are implemented.

The Saskatchewan Department of Environment and Public Security is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the strategy. Once the strategy was adopted, it identified the agencies that are to take part in its application.

* May or March? - Tr.

ALBERTA

It took the Alberta Round Table five years to build a consensus on sustainable development. Once the consensus was reached, the Round Table was divided into working groups responsible for conveying the Round Table's vision in co-operation with broad, multisectoral groups.

It was not the intention of the Alberta Round Table to prepare a single sustainable development strategy. The Round Table's view is that several sustainable development strategies should be developed by the sectors concerned.

Nonetheless, in 1991, the Alberta Round Table produced a document entitled *Alberta: Working for a Sustainable Future*, which contains its vision and guiding principles in the area of sustainable development. It comprises a framework, if not a strategy. The vision of the Alberta Round Table consists of the following aspects: maintaining air, water and soil quality; preserving biological diversity; living within the natural regeneration capacity of Alberta; promoting a healthy, environmentally sound economy; ensuring that market forces and the regulatory framework form the basis of sustainable development; promoting a healthy environment in both urban and rural areas; increasing the awareness of Albertans of sustainable development through environmental education.

The vision of the Alberta Round Table was unanimously approved by the Alberta Legislature. With the election of a new Premier, the government has undergone a reorganization. A new standing committee on natural resources and sustainable development policy has been created.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy was created in 1990 to prepare a sustainable development strategy for the province. One of its first steps was to publish a series of theme papers and background papers to inform the public on issues of sustainable development and to stimulate debate on these issues. Following a series of public forums, the Round Table received more than 1,000 written and oral submissions. The concerns expressed in the submissions were compiled by the Round Table and served as a basis in the preparation of a sustainable development strategy. In January 1992, the Round Table released a preliminary document entitled *Towards a Strategy for Sustainability*. It presents a comprehensive view of sustainable development in British Columbia, a vision of the future of sustainable development in the province, several recommendations for the British Columbia government and a framework for a sustainable development strategy.

A second round of public forums was then held to discuss this document. The revised version was presented to the provincial Cabinet as recommendations by the

Round Table. *Towards a Strategy for Sustainability* formed the basis for the preparation of a provincial sustainable development strategy based on four sectors: energy, education, economy and communities. Each of these sectors addresses one particular aspect of environmental sustainability and makes specific recommendations to the provincial government. The Round Table's economic strategy, entitled *An Economic Framework for Sustainability*, has just been released. It consists of a framework for economic change aimed at sustainable environmental development. The strategy contains 44 recommendations for the government and private sector, designed to facilitate the province's shift toward sustainable development. What this document refers to as "the new economy" takes into account the social and environmental impacts of development.

The other key document that makes up British Columbia's strategy is entitled *Strategic Directions for Community Sustainability*. It promotes initiatives designed to reconcile environmental, economic and social concerns at the community level.

The British Columbia Round Table recently received a new mandate from the government. It was directed to report to the public on the progress achieved by the province in the area of sustainable development. The first report is expected to be released in December 1993. It will address the government's follow-up of the Round Table's recommendations, the development of environmental sustainability indicators and the province's response to Agenda 21 (commitments made by Canada at the Earth Summit).

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Northwest Territories adopted a sustainable development strategy in November 1990. It was developed by an interdepartmental working group following a conference held in August 1987. Since that time, the efforts made to develop an action plan have been hindered by the general climate of spending restraint and the belief that the implementation of the strategy could be effectively organized through existing institutions. The government of the Northwest Territories has decided that its sustainable development objectives will be achieved through the integration of sustainable development principles in all memorandums to Cabinet. The Northwest Territories Department of Renewable Resources has been asked to report on this issue.

YUKON

In 1986, the Yukon government launched an important public consultation initiative aimed at developing an economic development strategy. The following year, it

initiated a second round of public consultations, this time with the objective of developing a conservation strategy. The strategies were approved by the provincial Cabinet, in 1988 and 1990 respectively. In 1988, the Yukon Council on the Economy and Environment was created to replace the Yukon Economic Council and was directed to implement the Yukon Economic Strategy. The *Yukon Conservation Strategy* is available in English only. The following principles guided the development of the Yukon Conservation Strategy: conservation of natural and human heritage; cultural awareness and recognition; integration of economy and environment; recognition of non-monetary values; preservation of our living resource "capital"; recognition of individual responsibility; informed decision-making; importance of education; and commitment to the global community.

The Yukon Conservation Strategy is aimed at achieving: sustainable use of renewable resources; development of a range of renewable resource uses; a stable, healthy non-renewable resource sector; integrated management of natural resources; protection of environmental quality; protection of human heritage; community involvement in decision-making about resource use; public awareness and understanding of sustainable development.

The Yukon Conservation Strategy and the existence of the Yukon Council on the Economy and Environment are included in the Yukon Environment Act. The Council has been directed to make recommendations to the Yukon Legislature respecting the implementation of the conservation and economic strategies.

SUMMARY

Overall, the response of Canada's provinces and territories to the sustainable development challenges issued by the Brundtland Commission to the international community and by the National Task Force on Environment and Economy to Canadian citizens and governments has been remarkable. All of the provinces have established round tables to facilitate the building of the societal consensus required to make the transition to sustainable development. All of the round tables have been given the mandate to prepare a regional sustainable development strategy or a framework for such a strategy (or even several sectoral strategies that form a comprehensive strategy, as in the case of Alberta and British Columbia). With the exception of one province, all of the round tables have submitted a sustainable development strategy, components of a sustainable development strategy or a conservation strategy that can be interpreted in conjunction with an economic development strategy to their respective governments.*

*What has characterized Canada's response to the challenge of restructuring to achieve sustainable development is the vast range of approaches taken by provincial and regional governments and the significant differences in the results achieved. At first blush, such variation would appear, paradoxically, to be both a strength and a weakness. The strength of the Canadian response is that the provinces and territories have been given considerable responsibility for choosing the tools to be used to achieve sustainable development. This is consistent with **Agenda 21**. The decentralization of this initiative, which is in fact dictated by the constitutional division of jurisdiction in the area of natural resources, is conducive to the creation of innovative solutions suited to the regional particularities of each province and territory.*

The weakness of this response would appear to derive from the difficulty in reconciling all of the strategies at the national level and in harmonizing the regional initiatives so that they complement rather than conflict with one another (for instance, if such a disparity were to result in increasing the obstacles to domestic trade). Domestic trade barriers have already been recognized as obstacles to Canada's economic development. The large number of policies and regulatory regimes in place across the country makes our market incomprehensible to Canadians and even more so to foreigners. This constitutes a considerable obstacle to foreign investment.

In conclusion, the response of Canada's provinces and territories to the challenges of sustainable development has so far been positive and encouraging. Canada has every reason to be proud of its progress. Nonetheless, the progress achieved must

* (NOTE: The role of round tables in building multisectoral consensus was the subject of a specialized study entitled Canadian Round Tables on the Environment and the Economy: Their History, Form and Function, by Ronald Doering, National Round Table on Environment and Economy, March 1993.)

not overshadow the significance of the steps still to come to pursue the societal changes dictated by the objective of sustainable development, or the importance of not losing sight of the national perspective in our concern to regionalize conservation and development initiatives.

